

Mar. Will you then write me a Sonnet in praise of my beautie?

Bene. In so high a stile Margaret, that no man living shall come ouer it, for in most comely truth thou deseruest it.

Mar. To haue no man come ouer me, why, shall I alwaies keepe below staires?

Bene. Thy wit is as quicke as the grey-hounds mouth, it catches.

Mar. And yours, as blunt as the Fencers foiles, which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit Margaret, it will not hurt a woman: and so I pray thee call Beatrice, I giue thee the bucklers.

Mar. Giue vs the swords, wee haue bucklers of our owne.

Bene. If you vse them Margaret, you must put in the pikes with a vice, and they are dangerous weapons for Maides.

Mar. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I thinke hath legges.

Bene. And therefore will come. The God of loue that sits aboue, and knowes me, and knowes me, how pittifull I deferue. I meane in fingring, but in louing, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first imploier of pandars, and a whole booke full of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose name yee runne smoothly in the euen rode of a blanke verse, why they were neuer so truly turned ouer and ouer as my poore selfe in loue: marrie I cannot shew it time, I haue tried, I can finde out no rime to Ladie but babie, an innocent rime: for scorne, horne, a hard time: for schoole foole, a babling time: verie ominous endings, no, I was not borne vnder a rising Planett, for I cannot woode in festiuall tearmes:

Enter Beatrice.
Sweete Beatrice wouldst thou come when I call'd thee?

Beat. Yea Signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O stay but till then.

Beat. Then, is spoken: fare you well now, and yet ere I goe, let me goe with that I came, which is, with knowing what hath past betwene you and Claudio.

Bene. Onely foule words, and thereupon I will kisse thee.

Beat. Foule words is but foule wind, and foule wind is but foule breath, and foule breath is noisome, therefore I will depart vnkist.

Bene. Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sence, so forcible is thy wit, but I must tell thee plainly, Claudio vndergoes my challenge, and either I must shortly heare from him, or I will subscribe him a coward, and I pray thee now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in loue with me?

Beat. For them all together, which maintain'd so politique a state of euill, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them: but for which of my good parts did you first suffer leue for me?

Bene. Suffer loue! a good epithite, I do suffer loue indeede, for I loue thee against my will.

Beat. In spite of your heart I thinke, alas poore heart, if you spight it for my sake, I will spight it for yours, for I will neuer loue that which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woode peaceably.

Beat. It appears not in this confession, there's not one wise man among twentie that will praise himselfe.

Bene. An old, an old instance Beatrice, that liu'd in the time of good neighbours, if a man doe not erect this age his owne tombe ere he dies, hee shall liue no longer in monuments, then the Bells ring, & the Widow weepes.

Beat. And how long is that thinke you?

Bene. Question, why an hower in clamour and a quarter in rheyne, therefore is it most expedient for the wife, if Don worne (his conscience) finde no impediment to the contrarie, to be the trumpet of his owne vertues, as I am to my selfe so much for praising my selfe, who I my selfe will beare witnesse is praise worthie, and now tell me, how doth your cofin?

Beat. Verie ill.

Bene. And how doe you?

Beat. Verie ill too.

Enter Ursula.

Bene. Serue God, loue me, and mend, there will I leaue you too, for here comes one in haste.

Vrs. Madam, you must come to your Vncle, yonder old coile at home, it is prouoed my Ladie Hero hath bin falselie accus'd, the Prince and Claudio mightlie abuse, and Don Iohn is the author of all, who is fled and gone: will you come presentlie?

Beat. Will you go heare this newes Signior?

Bene. I will liue in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy cies: and moreover, I will goe with thee to thy Vncles.

Enter Claudio, Prince, and three or foure with Tapers.

Cla. Is this the monument of Leonato?

Lord. It is my Lord. Epitaph.

Done to death by slanderous tongues,

Was the Hero that here lies:

Death in gherdon of her wrongs,

Giues her fame which neuer dies:

So the life that dyed with shame,

Lives in death with glorious fame.

Hang thou there vpon the tombe,

Praising her when I am domb.

Cla. Now musick sound & sing your solemn hymne

Song.
Pardon goddess of the night,
Those that slew thy virgin knight,
For the which with songs of woe,
Round about her tombe they goe:
Midnight assist our mone, helpe us to sigh and grone,
Heauily, heauily,
Graves yawne and yeelde your dead,
Till death be uttered,
Heauenly, heauenly.

Lo. Now vnto thy bones good night, yeerely will I do

Prin. Good morrow masters, put your Torches out,

The wolues haue preied, and looke, the gentle day

Before the wheels of Phoebus, round about

Dapples the drowfie East with spots of grey:

Thanks to you all, and leaue vs, fare you well.

Cla. Good morrow masters, each his seuerall way.

Prin. Come let vs hence, and put on other weedes,

And then to Leonatos we will goe.

Cla. And Hymen now with luckier issue speeds,

Then

Then this for whom we rendred vp this woe. Exeunt.

Enter Leonato, Bene, Marg, Ursula, old man, Frier, Hero.

Frier. Did I not tell you she was innocent?

Leo. So are the Prince and Claudio who accus'd her,

Vpon the error that you heard debated:

But Margaret was in some faule for this,

Although against her will as it appears,

In the true course of all the question.

Old. Well, I am glad that all things sort so well.

Bene. And so am I, being else by faith enforced

To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

Leo. Well daughter, and you gentlewomen all,

Wish draw into a chamber by your selues,

And when I send for you, come hither mask'd:

The Prince and Claudio promis'd by this howre

To visit me, you know your office Brother,

You must be father to your brothers daughter,

And giue her to young Claudio. Exeunt Ladies.

Old. Which I will doe with confirm'd countenance.

Bene. Frier, I must intreat your paines, I thinke.

Frier. To doe what Signior?

Bene. To binde me, or vndoe me, one of them:

Signior Leonato, truth it is good Signior,

Your neece regards me with an eye of fauour.

Leo. That eye my daughter lent her, 'tis most true.

Bene. And I doe with an eye of loue requite her.

Leo. The sight whereof I thinke you had from me,

From Claudio, and the Prince, but what's your will?

Bene. Your answer sir is Enigmatically,

But for my will, my will is, your good will

May stand with ours, this day to be conioyn'd,

In the state of honourable marriage,

In which (good Frier) I shall desire your helpe.

Leo. My heart is with your liking.

Frier. And my helpe.

Enter Prince and Claudio, with attendants.

Prin. Good morrow to this faire assembly.

Leo. Good morrow Prince, good morrow Claudio:

We heere attend you, are you yet determin'd,

To day to marry with my brothers daughter?

Cla. He hold my minde were he an Ethiope.

Leo. Call her forth brother, heres the Frier ready.

Prin. Good morrow Benedicke, why what's the matter?

That you haue such a Februarie face,

So full of frost, of storme, and clowdiness.

Cla. I thinke he thinks vpon the sauage bull:

Tush, feare not man, wee'll tip thy hornes with gold,

And all Europa shall reioyce at thee,

As once Europa did at lusty Ioue,

When he would play the noble beaft in loue.

Bene. Bull Ioue sir, had an amiable low,

And some such strange bull leapt your fathers Cow,

A got a Calfe in that same noble fear,

Much like to you, for you haue iust his bleat.

Enter brother, Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula.

Cla. For this I owe you: here comes other reckonings.

Which is the Lady I must seize vpon?

Leo. This same is she, and I doe giue you her.

Cla. Why then she's mine, sweet let me see your face.

Leo. No that you shal not, till you take her hand,

Before this Frier, and sweare to marry her.

Cla. Giue me your hand before this holy Frier,

I am your husband if you like of me.

Hero. And when I liu'd I was your other wife,

And when you lou'd, you were my other husband.

Cla. Another Hero? heere's still more woe.

Hero. Nothing certainer.

One Hero died, but I doe liue,

And surely as I liue, I am a maid.

Prin. The former Hero, Hero that is dead.

Leo. Shee died my Lord, but whiles her slander liu'd.

Frier. All this amazement can I qualifie,

When after that the holy rites are ended,

Ile tell you largely of faire Heroes death:

Meane time let wonder seeme familiar,

And to the chappell let vs presently.

Bene. Soft and faire Frier, which is Beatrice?

Beat. I answer to that name, what is your will?

Bene. Doe not you loue me?

Beat. Why no, no more then reason.

Bene. Why then your Vncle, and the Prince, & Claudio,

haue bene deceiued, they swore you did.

Beat. Doe not you loue mee?

Bene. Troth no, no more then reason.

Beat. Why then my Cofin Margaret and Ursula

Are much decei'd, for they did sweare you did.

Bene. They swore you were almost sicke for me.

Beat. They swore you were wel-nye dead for me.

Bene. 'Tis no matter, then you doe not loue me?

Beat. No truly, but in friendly recompence.

Leo. Come Cofin, I am sure you loue the gentlemā.

Cla. And Ile be sworn vpon't, that he loues her,

For heres a paper written in his hand,

A halting sonnet of his owne pure braine,

Fashioned to Beatrice.

Hero. And heeres another,

Writ in my cofins hand, stolne from her pocket,

Containing her affection vnto Benedicke.

Bene. A miracle, here's our owne hands against our

hearts: come I will haue thee, but by this light I take

thee for pittie.

Beat. I would not denie you, but by this good day, I

yeeld vpon great perswasion, & partly to saue your life,

for I was told, you were in a consumption.

Leo. Peace I will stop your mouth.

Prin. How dost thou Benedicke the married man?

Bene. Ile tell thee what Prince: a Colledge of witte-

crackers cannot flout mee out of my humour, dost thou

think I care for a Satyre or an Epigram? no, if a man will

be beaten with braines, a shall weare nothing handsome

about him: in brieft, since I do purpose to marry, I will

thinke nothing to any purpose that the world can say a-

gainst it, and therefore neuer flout at me, for I haue laid

against it: for man is a giddy thing, and this is my con-

clusion: for thy part Claudio, I did thinke to haue beaten

thee, but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, liue vn-

bruis'd, and loue my cousin.

Cla. I had well hop'd I wouldst haue denied Beatrice, y

I might haue cudgel'd thee out of thy single life, to make

thee a double dealer, which out of questiō thou wilt be,

if my Cousin do not looke exceeding narrowly to thee.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends, let's haue a dance

ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts,

and our wiues heeles.

Leo. Wee'll haue dancing afterward.

Bene. First, of my vvord, therefore play musick. Prince,

thou art sad, get thee a vvife, get thee a vvife, there is no

flaff more reuerend then one tipst with horn. Enter Mess.

Mess. My Lord, your brother Iohn is tane in flight,

And brought with armed men backe to Messina.

Bene. Thinke not on him till to morrow, ile deuise

thee braue punishments for him: strike vp Pipers, Dance.

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